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21 November 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director,
Office of Congressional Affairs

FROM:

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SUBJECT: Friends of Analysis Notes on Harvard Meeting

John:

I am attaching the three notes I drafted for the Friends of Analysis electronic network, regarding the 3 November Faculty Seminar at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

I apologize for my role in the controversy. I would be pleased to disseminate to the Friends of Analysis audience any material that you, Tenet, or Gershwin believe would more accurately or fairly characterize the issues I address.

Needless to say, I will not craft the promised note on covert action, at least until the rules of engagement for discussion within CIA are clarified. The rules for the Harvard faculty members at the 3 November meeting were: On the record, but not for attribution.

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DATE: November 7, 1988

NOTE TO: Friends of Analysis

SUBJECT: HAS THE AGENCY "JOINED THE GOVERNMENT"?

Harvard's Kennedy School of Government (KSG) sponsored a "faculty seminar" on CIA and Congress, on 3 November. This was the first attempt at broad faculty participation in an event sponsored under the CIA-funded Program on Assessment and Policymaking. Over 40 of the 50 invited faculty members attended, to hear presentations by: John Helgerson, Director, Office of Congressional Affairs; Tom Latimer, Staff Director, HPSCI; George Tenet and Sven Holmes, present and past staff directors, Senate Select Committee. Greg Treverton, KSG, moderated the discussion.

In this and subsequent FOA notes I will summarize the discussion, starting with changing patterns in congressional relations, then covering quality of intelligence analysis, and finally addressing Covert Action.

Ernest May and Dick Neustadt, KSG principals in the Program for Assessment and Policymaking, had been impressed, in previous events sponsored under the CIA contract, with the growth in ties between CIA and Congress, especially regarding intelligence assessments. John Helgerson's presentation of data on Congressional support and oversight made this point well.

- Over 1000 briefings in 1987 (roughly half by the DI; roughly half to committees or congressmen and half to staff members).
- Over 4,000 documents distributed to Congress (more than any individual executive branch policy official receives).
- Some 100 congressional delegations visited overseas stations.
- On the INF Treaty, CIA gave 40 briefings over a 6 month period, and answered hundreds of questions on monitoring.
- The DCI meets regularly with individual and small groups of congressmen.

Other speakers reinforced the picture of CIA positioned (to quote the DDCI) "nearly equidistant" between the Administration and Congress. George Tenet reported that Senator Bradley, who is looked to as a legislative authority on Soviet affairs, meets for 3 or more hours each month with D/SOVA and NIO/USSR.

Dick Neustadt, looking at this information as an authority on how governments work, observed that "CIA had joined the US Government," and was now much like the Department of Agriculture. That is, the Agency was no longer almost exclusively an instrument of the executive branch.

Neustadt earlier had made the point that CIA could now "learn" what the Ag Department seemingly always knew (and what State has never learned): Congress can serve as a buffer against unwanted Administration pressures (political, budgetary). After the formal meeting, the point was made that greater congressional awareness of CIA's assessments would tend to complicate Executive initiatives based on partisan or ideological views of threats or opportunities in national security matters. The resultant likely

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lock" would suit some observers and frustrate others.

A remark by Greg Treverton provides a fitting end for this note. When Congress gets to know you well enough to help you, it feels it knows you well enough to tell you how to do your business. (Here come the interesting 1990s).



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DATE: November 8, 1988

NOTE TO: Friends of Analysis

SUBJECT: CONGRESS & INTEL ANALYSIS

This is the second of three notes on the proceedings of a Kennedy School of Government "faculty seminar" on CIA and Congress. The first note--"Has the Agency Joined the Government?"--was issued on 7 November.

George Tenet and Tom Latimer, staff directors respectively of the Senate and House select intel committees, both spoke to the issue of the quality and utility of intelligence analysis. The kindest remark I can recall is that our work is "uneven." Political analysis was the primary target. Defense of analysis by CIA representatives at the seminar probably served to limit the damage with the audience of 40+ Harvard professors.

Tenet, before his recent appointment as staff director, specialized in arms control issues for the Senate Select Committee. After saying that the quality and utility of analysis "varies," he concentrated on an NIE--re the INF Treaty--which he characterized as "useless." In effect, the content of the estimate did not contain information and judgments that would have enabled the Senators to decide on whether to support the draft treaty. The Senate had to submit hundreds of questions to get what it needed to do its job. He left the impression that the analysts finally delivered.

Latimer was much more critical. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] had had policy-support assignments with the NSC staff and DOD before joining the HPSCI staff. He said that, while congressmen will read more assessments than executive branch policy officials, intelligence doesn't make any more direct impact on legislation than it does on policy. He singled out political analysis as a disaster area: Worse than in the past with no chance of improving; Journalists and Harvard professors do better than DI analysts; Congressmen and executive officials would do better to rely on their own judgments.

The specific shortcomings that were identified (mostly by Latimer) sound similar to the criticisms levied during the early 1980s. To be blunt: Latimer sees no improvement since the Iran failure and the Gates regime: in fact, current performance is not as good [REDACTED]

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--RELEVANCE: CIA analysts don't understand enough about Washington politics to make their products count.

--POOR RESOURCE UTILIZATION: The DI has taken on new tasks (drugs and thugs for example) without closing down any old accounts. We don't seek and hold the best people.

--INSULARITY: Intell analysts spend too much time "analyzing intelligence"; i.e., over-reliance on the "inbox."

--PAROCHIALISM: We don't know the countries and cultures we follow

--TIMING: When we do have good products, it is hit and miss whether the

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right people will get it at the right time.

--POLITICIZATION: While some analysts are concerned about political pressures, others are all too ready to join the policy team.



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DATE: November 14, 1988

NOTE TO: Friends of Analysis

SUBJECT: INSULARITY (CONGRESS & INTEL ANALYSIS)

[] asks for an explanation of the charge by Tom Latimer, Staff Director, HPSCI, that DI analysts rely too heavily on their inbox ([] FOA Note of 8 Nov).

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Latimer did not use the term "insularity," but he did say we spend too much time "analyzing intelligence" (e.g., classified traffic) and too little time learning about countries and subjects in depth. He specifically compared analysts unfavorably with academics on this score.

[] of ALA, who is attending a program at Kennedy School and who was invited to the 3 November faculty seminar, responded forcefully and (in my judgment) effectively to Latimer. [] implied that Latimer's views of analysts were out of date. Many of the analysts have lived in the countries they are responsible for analyzing, have studied and at times taught in university programs on their country or region, know the languages as well as the cultures, and were otherwise well prepared for understanding their accounts in depth.

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